The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE —
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1670 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 1943 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 33, NO. 15

AFL Launches All-Out Drive To Slash Basic Food Prices As Green Demands Official Ruling On New Wage Policy

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

The other night the New Leader, well-known and influential Socialist weekly publication, celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a dinner at the Hotel Commodore in New York City attended by many of the nation's outstanding leaders of liberal thought.

AFL President William Green, who, to the best of our knowledge, is not and never has been a Socialist, delivered a significant address at this meeting. We would like to call attention to some of his statements because of their highly important bearing on past, present and future developments affecting the welfare of our country.

First of all, Mr. Green attested to the fact that in the past two decades, while some of America's best-advertised liberals danced to the tune of "every new piper of false philosophies" and permitted themselves to be used for the furtherance of the nefarious objectives of the Communist Party in this country, the New Leader remained stalwartly steadfast in its opposition to all anti-democratic movements and performed yeoman service in exposing the hypocrisy of the Communist Party line.

Secondly, Mr. Green emphasized that the New Leader from the beginning refused to jump aboard the CIO bandwagon along with other so-called liberals but publicly and courageously disclosed the "fundamental frailty" of the dual labor movement's claims.

The Truth Becomes Clear

"Everyone in America realizes now things that were clear then to only a few observers of the labor movement," Mr. Green continued. Among these he listed:

"That the creation of the CIO constituted a repudiation of one of the basic principles of democracy, namely, majority rule; that the original leader of the CIO precipitated a civil war in the ranks of organized labor to satisfy his personal aspirations for dictatorship; and that the CIO provided the Communist Party in this country with its first opportunity to gain a foothold in trade union organizations."

Mr. Green congratulated the New Leader, therefore, for helping the whole course of liberal thought in America to grow up and come of age.

Ever since Pearl Harbor, he continued, labor has given all of its attention to the problems of increasing production so as to win the war in the shortest possible time.

Taking advantage of labor's preoccupation with the immediate task of winning the battle of production, he charged, labor's enemies "have attempted to steal a march on us."

He warned that the purpose behind the concerted drive of reactionary interests to destroy the power of the trade union movement through restrictive Federal and State legislation is to limit labor's sphere of influence in the post-war world. They fear revolution in Europe after the war is over, Mr. Green said, and they dread that the contagion of such upheavals will spread in this country.

The Shape of Things To Come

Here is where Mr. Green made one of his main points. He said:

"The reactionary interests responsible for this concerted drive against labor are their own worst enemies. They do not seem to realize that the shortest cut to revolution in America is the destruction of the trade union movement which has carried on an unceasing fight against any and all anti-democratic philosophies throughout its existence.

"Organized labor knows that the best guarantee against revolution in this country after the war is social and economic security. Our domestic post-war program calls for jobs for all and social insurance for all. The American Federation of Labor will exert all of its economic and political power to carry this program into effect."

We wish that every business man and industrial leader in America could read these words and take them to heart and learn the lesson that the shape of things to come can be molded now by intelligent and constructive Government-management-labor cooperation, that the danger for the future lies chiefly in disunity and class warfare.

Mr. Green made one final point, with regard to international relationships. He declared:

"We in America, despite our traditional reluctance to intervene in foreign affairs, must assume our share of the responsibility for maintaining world peace. In self defense alone, if for no other reason, we must abandon forever the policy of isolationism. In company with our allies who comprise the United Nations, we must first formulate a just peace and then establish an international tribunal empowered to maintain it."

That is a policy to which all Americans can subscribe.

AFL Fights Plot of Rent Gougers

Washington, D. C.—Organized real estate interests have launched a campaign to break down what is perhaps the only effective feature of the government's price stabilization program—rent controls.

Leading the drive is the National Association of Real Estate Boards, which sent a delegation of lobbyists to OPA Administrator Prentiss M. Brown to demand that rent regulations be eased up and that a curb on "phoney" sales of homes be abandoned.

At the same time, at least six bills, inspired by greedy landlords, have poured in on Congress, all seeking to relax or cripple OPA ceilings on rents.

Spokesmen for organized labor denounced the "wrecking program" of the real estate lobbies.

Boris Shishkin, economist for the AFL and secretary of its housing committee, said:

"Now is the time to hold the line on prices, not breach it. The program of the Association of Real Estate Boards is an invitation to gouge war workers and to allow wholesale evictions."

Postal Workers Win Pay Raise

Washington, D. C.—Culminating a long and difficult campaign by postal unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, the Meade-O'Brien bill, providing the first pay increase for Post Office employes in many years, was signed by President Roosevelt.

The new law grants an average increase of $25 per month, or $300 per year, to postal employes in the field service, with a provision that those paid on an hourly, fee, part-time, or per diem basis, together with fourth-class postmasters and special-delivery messengers, shall get an increase of 15 per cent, or not over $300 a year extra.

The percentage increase for the fourth-class postmasters and special-delivery messengers also applies to clerks at third-class post-offices, charmen and charwomen, substitute and temporary employes, clerical-mechanical employes, skilled tradesmen in the mail-equipment shops and rural delivery carriers serving one tri-weekly route.

Rural delivery carriers serving two tri-weekly routes are on a full-time basis and come under the provisions of the bill providing for an average increase of $25 per month.

Provision is also made for a 15 per cent increase in the allowance to third-class postmasters for clerk hire, this amount not to exceed $500.

ITU IS ASKED TO FAVOR REAFFILIATION WITH AFL

Newark, N. J. — Newark Typographical Union No. 103 has sponsored a resolution setting in motion the legal procedure to initiate a membership referendum on the question of reaffiliation of the International Typographical Union with the American Federation of Labor.

The resolution, which must be indorsed by 150 local unions, declares that "the question of adjusting differences between the ITU and AFL regarding observance of autonomous rights of the ITU have never been clearly presented for consideration by the membership, having been confused with partisan consideration which should have no place in deciding this issue."

AMERICAN CAN CO. PLANT VOTES AFL BIG MAJORITY

Washington, D. C.—The employes of the American Can Co., Jersey City, N. J., cast 697 votes for the American Federation of Labor, with only 32 employes voting no union, in a National Labor Relations Board election to choose a representative for collective bargaining, Organizer Charles J. Jennings reported to AFL President William Green. The CIO withdrew from the poll.

LA GUARDIA BACKS STARR FOR EDUCATION DIRECTOR

New York, N. Y.—Mayor La Guardia declared "there is no question about Mark Starr's qualifications" for the position of adult education director in the schools of New York City and asserted that "in all probability he will be appointed." He made this statement after receiving the report submitted by Commissioner William B. Herlands condemning the action of the Board of Education in rejecting, by a vote of 4 to 2, Mr. Starr, who is educational director of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and a member of the American Federation of Teachers.

The appointment of Starr was recommended by the Board of Superintendents and the Board of Examiners, but was rejected by the Education Board because of his record in favor of labor unions.

President Roosevelt's Statement

Washington, D. C.—Following is the text of President Roosevelt's statement on the new stabilization program:

The executive order I have signed today is a hold-the-line order.

To hold the line we cannot tolerate further increases in prices affecting the cost of living or further increases in general wage or salary rates except where clearly necessary to correct substandard living conditions. The only way to hold the line is to stop trying to find justifications for not holding it here or not holding it there.

No one straw may break a camel's back, but there is always a last straw. We cannot afford to take further chances in relaxing the line. We already have taken too many.

On the price front, the directions in the order are clear and specific.

All items affecting the cost of living are to be brought under control. No further price increases are to be sanctioned unless imperatively required by law. Adjustments in the price relationships between different commodities will be permitted if such adjustments can be made without increasing the general cost of living. But any further inducements to maintain or increase production must not be allowed to disturb the present price levels; such further inducements, whether they take the form of support prices or subsidies, must not be allowed to increase prices to consumers. Of course, the extent to which subsidies and other payments may be used to help keep down the cost of living will depend on Congressional authorization.

Some prices affecting the cost of living are already above the levels of Sept. 15, 1942. All of these cannot be rolled back. But some of these can and should be rolled back. The order directs the reduction of all prices which are excessively high, inequitable, or unfair. The stabilization act was not intended to be used as a shield to protect prices which were excessively high on Sept. 15, 1942.

On the wage front the directions in the order are equally clear and specific.

There are to be no further increases in wage rates or salaries' scales beyond the Little Steel formula, except where clearly necessary to correct substandards of living. Reclassifications and promotions must not be permitted to affect the general level of production costs or to justify price increases or to forestall price reductions.

The order also makes clear the authority of the chairman of the War Manpower Commission to forbid the employment by an employer of any new employe except in accordance with regulations of the chairman, the purpose being to prevent such employment at a higher wage or salary than that received by the employe in his last employment unless the change of employment will aid in the prosecution of the war.

It further calls the attention of all agencies of the Federal Government and of state and municipal authorities concerned with the rates of common carriers and public utilities to the stabilization program in the hope that rate increases will be disapproved and rate reductions ordered so far as may be consistent with Federal and state laws.

For some time it has been apparent that this action must be taken because of the continued pressure for increased wages and increased prices. I have heretofore refrained from acting because of the contention of the supporters of the Bankhead bill that under the act of Oct. 2, 1942, I had no authority to place ceiling prices on certain commodities at existing levels. My views on that question were set forth in my message of April 2 vetoing the Bankhead bill.

The Senate did not vote upon the question of passing the bill over the veto. Its author moved to recommit the bill to the Committee on Agriculture, stating that there were not sufficient votes to override the veto.

I am advised that weeks or months from this date the bill may be reported for consideration. I am also advised that in the history of the Congress no bill vetoed by a President and recommitted to a committee has ever become law.

I cannot wait to see whether the committee at some future date will again report the bill to the Senate. I cannot permit a continuance of the upward spiral of prices.

Some groups have been urging increased prices for farmers on the ground that wage earners have unduly profited. Other groups have been urging increased wages on the ground that farmers have unduly profited. Any continuance of this conflict will not only cause inflation, but will breed disunity at a time when unity is essential.

Under the act of Oct. 2, 1942, Congress directed that, so far as practicable, wages, salaries and prices should be stabilized as of the level of Sept. 15. Under that direction inflation has been slowed up. Now we must stop it.

We cannot stop inflation solely by wage and price ceilings. We cannot stop it solely by rationing. To complete the job, Congress must act to reduce and hold in check the excess purchasing power. We must be prepared to tax ourselves more, to spend less and save more. The details of new fiscal legislation must be worked out by the appropriate committees of the House and the Senate. The executive departments stand ready to submit suggestions whenever the committees desire.

I am exerting every power I possess to preserve our stabilization program.

I am sure the Congress will cooperate.

Tributes To "Labor For Victory"

Washington, D. C.—Labor For Victory celebrated its first anniversary on the air with a report on war production by AFL President William Green and tributes from outstanding leaders of the nation's war effort to the benefits of labor's own radio program. Some of these tributes follow.

ELMER DAVIS, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION: "The 'Labor For Victory' program has a big and continuing job of educating and informing workers of their importance to the winning of the war. You have been building morale the right way—by having your own workers and your own leaders tell the story of the war we are waging in the factory, the mine, the home and on the highways."

PAUL V. McNUTT, CHAIRMAN OF THE WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION: "Your program has been helpful in developing through public understanding the greater utilization of all labor in war and essential industries."

DONALD M. NELSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE WAR PRODUCTION BOARD: "I am happy to congratulate 'Labor For Victory' on its first year of promoting the philosophy of more and more production for war and to hope that the program will continue to stimulate all-out effort on the home front."

REAR ADMIRAL C. W. FISHER, UNITED STATES NAVY: "This radio series has done much to emphasize the splendid fight that labor and the Navy has been making against the enemies of our nation."

ROBERT P. PATTERSON, UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR: "'Labor For Victory,' organized labor's radio program, has helped to strengthen the bond between the production front and the fighting front. That union of labor and soldier will smash America's enemies under the weight of American production and military might."

Nelson Favors Vacations For Workers

Washington, D. C.—Chairman Donald M. Nelson of the War Production Board gave his official blessing to vacations for war workers this year. He said:

"I believe that the granting of vacations to industrial workers this year will be helpful to war production. Experience has shown that the volume of production is increased if the workers can restore their energies through periods of physical and mental rest, change and relaxation. After a brief vacation a worker should be in better shape to contribute to the increased effort which our war program makes necessary.

"But it must be realized that our war production goals this year are nearly twice the size of last year's. Wartime vacations must be planned so as to avoid interruption of working schedules. Management and labor can and should plan the release of workers for vacations by working ahead in some departments, by arranging for staggered vacation schedules, by training substitutes and, where necessary, by working additional overtime. There must be no shutdown of any department of a war production plant if that would curtail production.

"Wartime vacations of course cannot be like peacetime vacations. The wartime vacation will probably be briefer than usual; it should involve little or no travel, and where possible it should be used for the performance of such duties as otherwise would require the worker to take time off during a regular workweek. But even under such limitations, the vacation can help war production by enabling the worker to return to his job with renewed strength and energy."

F. D. R. Hits Congress For Lifting Ban On High War Incomes

Washington, D. C.—On the heels of his Executive Order severely restricting wage increases for workers, President Roosevelt permitted a Congressional rider ending the $25,000 limitation on net incomes to become law without his signature.

In so doing, however, the President made it clear in a public statement that he would have vetoed the measure if it had not been attached to vital legislation increasing the nation's debt limit to 210 billion dollars.

The President said:

"The Congress has chosen to rescind my action limiting excessive salaries without even attempting to offer a substitute. The result is that Congress has authorized the drafting of men into the Army for $600 a year regardless of whether they are earning $1,000 or $100,000 a year, but has refused to authorize the reduction in the salary of any man not drafted into the Army no matter how high his income may be.

"At the same time the stabilization program enacted by the Congress requires wage increases to be denied to workers earning $1,500 a year even when their employers are willing to pay those wage increases. The essence of stabilization is that each should sacrifice for the benefit of all. This principle the Congress has failed to recognize.

"Some two or three thousand persons who, on Sept. 15, 1942, were receiving salaries in excess of $67,200 may continue to receive them. About 750 persons will be able to receive salaries in excess of $100,000; about 30 persons, salaries in excess of $250,000, and 3 or 4 persons, salaries in excess of $500,000.

"One hundred and thirty million Americans can make the stabilization program work even though a relative handful of persons are not obliged to cooperate as they should. The exemption accorded these excessively high salaries does not help morale, but American morale is too strong to be permanently injured by this ill-considered action."

Earlier, faced with President Roosevelt's veto of the Bankhead bill, which would have increased food prices, the farm bloc in the Senate refused to risk a vote on upholding the veto and had the measure referred back to committee. While this action postpones, at least, any attempt to override the veto, the President criticized the evasion as another failure on the part of Congress to take affirmative action to stabilize the cost of living.

BRANDEIS LABOR COLONY HONORS WILLIAM GREEN

New York City — William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, will be the guest of honor at a dinner for the Louis D. Brandeis Labor Colony for refugees in Palestine, which is being sponsored by a national committee of labor and other representative leaders of American industrial, civic and political life. The function will take place in the Hotel Commodore, here, on June 23.

Mr. Green accepted the invitation at the request of a delegation of New York labor leaders, who are actively supporting the establishment of the colony. The delegation was headed by Thomas Murtha, president of the New York City Central Trades and Labor Council, and Isidore Nagler, chairman of the Brandeis Committee, and included Joseph Breslaw, vice-president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; Sol Cilento, secretary-treasurer of the Distillery and Rectifiers International Union; A. Mendelowitz, vice-president of the Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union, and David Siegel, president of the Joint Council of Hotel and Restaurant Workers Unions and Bartenders International League of Greater New York.

HELEN HAYES HITS TOP IN RED CROSS CAMPAIGN

Nyack, N. Y.—Helen Hayes, currently starring in "Harriet," life story of Harriet Beecher Stowe, scored another smash success as the Nyack Red Cross Chapter's 1943 War Fund drive, which she headed, went over the top.

Heavy contributors to the drive were Rockland County's labor unions, whose Red Cross gifts ran into thousands of dollars. Two AFL unions at Gair Cartons, Inc., a paper box factory within the Nyack Chapter area, presented Miss Hayes with a check for $1,000—30 per cent higher than the usual total for this plant.

Accepting the contribution, Miss Hayes said, "I belong to an AFL union, too, you know (Actors' Equity), and I hope we do as well nationally as you have done here."

Byrnes Asked To Enforce Price Controls And To Permit Wage Adjustments To Correct Inequities

Washington, D. C.—The AFL launched an all-out drive for the drastic reduction of food prices following issuance of President Roosevelt's Executive Order clamping the lid down tight on wage increases.

President William Green served notice on Economic Stabilization Director Byrnes at a White House conference that labor will expect the Government to live up to the letter and spirit of the Chief Executive's directive that the cost of living must not be increased and that prices for basic commodities be "rolled back" to Sept. 15 levels wherever possible.

At the same time, Mr. Green demanded of Byrnes a specific and official interpretation of the extent and nature of the new restrictions on wage increases. He made it clear that to avoid suffering and unrest it is vital that such clear information be made available for distribution to all local unions.

For instance, it was reported that the members of the National War Labor Board themselves are in doubt as to whether the President's order completely bars wage adjustments to correct inequalities and inequities among various groups of workers and individuals.

At a press conference in New York City, Mr. Green made it clear that he is in full sympathy with the objectives of the President's "hold-the-line" program, but he declined to approve or disapprove it in its entirety until labor is given further clarification of its provisions and concrete proof that it will be justly administered.

"If the inflation spiral gets out of control," Mr. Green told reporters, "the working men and women of this country will suffer most. We deem it our duty to prevent such a catastrophe."

Grave concern was expressed by some AFL officials as to whether the Office of Price Administration intends to take any action to reduce food prices or even whether it will make an effective effort to freeze such prices at existing levels.

It was pointed out that practically every new price ceiling announced by OPA has resulted in higher prices rather than lower ones. It was further stated that the basic policy of the OPA for some time has been one of cowardly appeasement of vendors while the interests of consumers have been largely ignored. Caught between the twin problems of food shortages and ascending prices, the OPA has preferred to make concessions to profiteers instead of getting tough with them.

For these reasons, American Federation of Labor officials have become convinced that the voice of labor must be heard in the high councils of the OPA and the new Food Administration headed by Chester C. Davis. President Green has formally demanded real labor representation in these agencies so that the interests of consumers can be better protected.

At the same time AFL leaders feel that Central Labor Unions in all cities should conduct surveys of the extent of price increases in their communities and direct strong protests to the Government when they obtain proof of excessive boosts. Such action from the localities is necessary to support the case organized labor is presenting to Government leaders in the nation's capital.

Labor's drive for lower food prices will assume even greater importance and significance if the President's wage order is officially interpreted by Administrator Byrnes in its narrowest terms.

Then organized labor will be able to fight for wage increases chiefly by fighting for lower prices, so that the restricted weekly pay of workers will be able to buy more.

Morgenthau And Green Launch Drive For New 13-Billion-Dollar War Loan

New York City—Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau and AFL President William Green jointly launched the Government's Second War Loan Drive to raise 13 billion dollars to finance the Allied offensive aimed at crushing Berlin, Rome and Tokyo.

Speaking from Carnegie Hall over a nation-wide NBC radio hookup, Secretary Morgenthau called upon all workers to double their purchases of War Bonds in order to hasten the defeat of the Axis.

In reply, President Green said:

"As the spokesman for more than 6,000,000 loyal American men and women who make up the American Federation of Labor, I can make only one response to the inspiring appeal just voiced by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau—you can count on every last dollar above what it costs us to live for War Bonds.

"The workers of America are hard pressed these days by inflated prices for the necessities of life, by higher taxes and by increasing obligations to contribute to the relief of the suffering and oppressed. But the needs of our country are paramount to all other considerations. The cause of victory in this war has first call upon each of us. We know it takes a great deal of money to carry on the fight—more money than we can readily imagine—and our earnings are at the nation's service.

"America's soldiers of production who are working day and night in the factories and the shipyards to hasten the day of victory will not hold back their spare dollars from the cause to which they are gladly contributing their sweat and their toil.

"They know that the only way they can save for the future—the only way free men and women can look forward to any future—is to help Uncle Sam in every way possible to win this war.

"In the past, American workers were generous spenders. They believed in investing a large part of their earnings in mechanical improvements and recreational opportunities which our modern civilization created. In this way they helped to maintain and sustain the comparatively high American standard of living.

"But this war has taught us that for the duration, at least, it is more blessed to lend than to spend—provided, of course, that we lend our money to the Government. Today unnecessary expenditures help Hitler. Today every dollar we can invest in War Bonds brings victory and peace a moment closer.

"Even before America was actually forced into this war, when our national defense program first got under way, the American Federation of Labor officially and actively enlisted in what was then known as the Defense Bond drive. When war broke out we redoubled our efforts to enroll every one of our members on the payroll allotment plan under which the worker agrees to the deduction of 10 per cent of his wages each week for the purchase of War Bonds. This program resulted during the first year in the purchase of more than a billion dollars worth of War Bonds by members of the American Federation of Labor.

"Now the United States Treasury in order to pay the costs of a vast offensive which we confidently hope will crush Berlin, Rome and Tokyo, offers the American people an opportunity for each of them to do their bit by subscribing to the Second War Loan. A total of 13 billion dollars must be raised by this loan, not in substitution for regular War Bond receipts, but in addition to them.

"Secretary Morgenthau, the workers of America are not 10 per cent patriots. They possess no accumulated wealth. Their weekly income is limited and by no means certain. But you may rest assured that they will be only too glad to deny themselves even accustomed comforts in order to put the new Government loan over the top. Their answer to the Government's call will be a mountain of dollar bills that will bury the enemies of democracy and make victory possible."

AFL ENTERTAINERS GO OVERSEAS WITH TROOPS

Washington, D. C.—A total of [illegible] entertainers in 45 units have been sent to entertain troops overseas, the Office of War Information reported in a review of overseas work of USO-Camp Shows, Inc. Practically all of these entertainers are members of AFL unions.

This represents a considerable sacrifice of time, comfort and money by those who are trouping abroad, the OWI said. Many have gone by boat through submarine-infested waters, and those who have gone by plane have not always found the trip to be free of danger. Three traveling USO entertainers — [illegible], dancer; Christine [illegible], [illegible] and singer, and Adelaide Joy, singing comedienne—were killed in a Royal Canadian Air Force accident near Vancouver, B. C., on March 27, and two others—the singer, Tamara, and Roy Rognan, the comedian and dancer—lost their lives in the crash of the Yankee Clipper in the Tagus River at Lisbon on February 22.